

## A STUDY ON FEMALE UZBEKISTANI KOREANS' EXPERIENCES OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to review the experiences of female Uzbekistani Koreans, who married Korean from South Korea and have experienced a mixture of languages, culture and mindset from three different countries - Uzbekistan, Russia, South Korea, and the effect these experiences have on their children's bilingual education.*

*Thus, this study intends to examine how the mothers' experiences affect the bilingual education of multicultural family children, the bilingual education method of Uzbekistani Korean mothers, and the problems Uzbekistani Korean mothers face in the process of bilingual education. In this respect, using the case study method, this study examined the bilingual education method of female Uzbekistani Koreans through in-depth interviews. The results of the study showed that female Uzbekistani Koreans mainly incorporate multimedia, print media and the help of babysitters into the bilingual education of their children. Also, the problems which occurred in bilingual education were discovered to be barbarism and phonetic defect through these research results we could look at the bilingual education experiences of female Uzbekistani Koreans. In conclusion, we suggest alternatives to help the bilingual education of female Uzbekistani Koreans' children with the focus on these findings.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Female Uzbekistani Korean, Multicultural Family, Bilingual Education, Experience, In-Depth Interview*

**Received:** Jun 03, 2016; **Accepted:** Jul 01, 2016; **Published:** Jul 13, 2016; **Paper Id.:** IJESRAUG20165

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background/ Objectives and Goals

Language is not only the means of communication, but also the means to deliver or receiver information. Moreover, it is an eye which has the possibility to look at the world and understand it. When a child begins to speak in any language for the first time that language is the mother tongue for him. When a child begins speaking for the first time, there is no relation with country, nation and society in which he was born, he usually utters the word 'mother'. For a child who was born in Korea, the word 'omma' and for a child who was born in United States the words 'mom', 'mommy' mean the most precious human in the world who gave them a life. Although there are different linguistic codes of expression, both children mean the same human. However the first time a child began to see and understand the world from the word 'mother', but as soon as this word 'mom' means not only the human who gave him or her a life, but it also signifies the country where his or her mother lives and the language which is used by his or her mother. Accordingly, the concepts 'mother', 'language' and 'home country' are connected to each other. In this context, the purpose of this study is to look at the bilingual educational

experience of Female Uzbekistan Koreans, whose native language is Russian. In particular, it reviewed how the mothers' language and cultural experience of three countries: Uzbekistan, Russia and Korea affect their children's bilingual education.

### **Status of Uzbekistan Korean Multicultural Families**

According to the Embassy of Korea in Uzbekistan, there are currently about 18 million Korean diaspora in Uzbekistan and it is the largest in (total 500 thousand people) among CIS countries.

Kwon & Yim (2006) analyzed the survey by Korean diaspora in Uzbekistan. According to it, the younger age the more Uzbekistani Koreans think Russian is their native language. Uzbekistani Koreans recognize the concept of "mother tongue" in two senses. One of this is "the language in which they think and speak (native language)" and other one is "the language of the ancestors (mother language)".

According to the statistics of female marriage immigrants in Korea of December 2015, female marriage immigrants have increased steadily to 149 872 people by 6% per year. Nowadays in Korean female marriage immigrants are accounted for 126 765 people, and this 86.5% overall. And female marriage immigrants from Uzbekistan are only 1.4% of all these female marriage immigrants (1442 people) (Low Statistic Reports, 2015.12).

### **Concepts and Methods Of Bilingual Education**

According to Nakajima (2012), linguistic problems of children in multicultural families appear when a child is 5 years old, his or her mother tongue becomes his second language. Thus, bilingual education not only improves the language skills of a child, but it also represents the relationship with the mother as well as the identity of the mother.

Bilingual education is a concept that is symmetrical to a single language education. Moreover, this education can help one to be fluent in more than one language (Baek, 2005). Bilingual education methods are divided into two groups: immersion and two way bilingual education. First, immersion program is when the target language is used for education, with the method of concentrating the school life as a whole on the target language. Second, two way bilingual education (dual bilingual education) is a method for students who have different mother tongue are collected into one class for goal of learning two languages (for goal of bilingual). So this method is concentrate in education of learning two languages (Baek, 2005).

There are also receptive language and expressive language which influence the language proficiency of children. In particular, when female marriage immigrants use multiple languages, it has many differences between receptive and expressive languages. If a child uses two or more languages with his or her mother, there can be lack of vocabulary skills in the receptive language and errors can appear in the use of vocabulary, which can lead to a use of a language which does not match the situation. Therefore, in this case, the child uses mainly short sentences. But if both of parents are fluently bilingual, the child does not have any difficulties with his receptive and expressive language skills. Thus, the child knows the exact phonological differences between two languages (Oh, 2009). Therefore, a bilingual education of female marriage immigrants will be helpful for processing languages skills of their children.

## **METHODS**

The purpose of this study is to explore the bilingual education experiences of female Uzbekistani Korean multicultural families. To realize this purpose, we have examined the methods and problems of bilingual education of

female Uzbekistani Korean multicultural families through in-depth interview. In-depth interview is useful for exploring the issues which are invisible on the surface in-depth, therefore we analyzed their cases through in-depth interview. The case studies carried out in the context of the phenomenon that is the border with empirical inquiry which does not clearly distinguish the situation of the contemporary phenomenon consisting in the actual context (Yeong et al., 2012). Therefore, we choose a suitable method – case study, and from this method we analyzed the children's bilingual education conducted by female marriage immigrants who have the same situation and context.

This study was carried out by applying the case type claimed by Stake (1995). Stake (1995) has suggested three types of case studies. The first type is intrinsic case study. The second is the instrumental case study. And the last one is collective (or complex) case study. In this study we applied the instrumental case study to understand the role of female Uzbekistani Koreans' experiences to the process the children's bilingual education as the instrumental case study method is used to find answers to the problems and issues of research.

### **General Characteristics and Selection of Participants**

In this study, we selected female Uzbekistani Koreans who are the most suitable to research topic and purpose as the research participants. Selection criteria of the study participants were set as follows. Female Uzbekistani Koreans, who married Koreans from South Korea, have children who are educating their children bilingually.

In-depth interviews were conducted from November 1, 2015 to December 31 and the length of interviews varied from 90 to 120 minutes.

The researchers selected three female Uzbekistani Koreans as research participants. Looking at the characteristics of the study participants, participant A is a teacher, is 33 years old and has three children. Her mother tongue is Russian, and also she speaks Korean and English well. She is teaching her children English and Russian as second and third languages. Participant B is a housewife, is 28 years old and has two children. She is fluent in Russian, and she has good English and Korean skills. Mother tongue of her children is Korean, and their second and third languages are Russian and English. Participant C is 33 years old, is an office worker and has two children. Russian is her mother tongue and her English skills are better than Korean, because she majored in English language and literature in university. Her children use three languages, and their mother language is Korean. Moreover, a period of residence in Uzbekistan of participants A, B and C ranges from 18 to 24 years, while period of residence in Korea is 8-9 years. Thus, the reason we selected these particular research participants is to examine the bilingual education process of female Uzbekistani Korean multicultural families which have the similar backgrounds and face similar problems.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

This study collected data through in-depth interview. In-depth interview is the main method of data collection in qualitative research. First, we explained the purpose of this study to the research participants and got a written consent to conduct in-depth interviews. The interviews were done about 90-120 minutes with each participant and it was recorded with a voice recorder. Data which could not be collected from the interviews, was collected additionally through a phone conversation. In-depth interview questions began from female Uzbekistani Koreans' life in Uzbekistan. The reason is to understand experiences of female Uzbekistani Koreans. And the second question is the status of bilingual education of female Uzbekistani Korean multicultural families. Moreover, through the question "what bilingual education methods are used by female Uzbekistani Koreans and what kind of problems they have in this process?" we examined the status of

bilingual education of female Uzbekistani Korean multicultural families.

Data analysis was performed by analyzing between the cases as used in qualitative case studies. First, we heard the recorded files several times and tried to understand the overall context and then summarized them case-by-case. Then, we transcribed the files. After reading the data again we tried to find the issues related to the bilingual education experiences of female Uzbekistani Koreans. By analyzing each case we tried to compare the similarities and differences between these cases and tried to find new issues.

## RESULTS

The research results are comprised of the analysis between the cases. By constantly comparing the cases we found similarities and differences between the cases and analyzed them.

### Analysis of Cases

- **Methods Of Bilingual Education**

The results of the in-depth interview on the children's bilingual education methods of female Uzbekistani Koreans showed that they are conducting this education through mixed media, print media, babysitters, elementary, secondary and high school, simultaneous interpretation, communication resource and private school(educational institute). The detailed information is as follows.

- **By Using Mixed Media**

According to the in-depth interview, all participants use mixed media for bilingual education.

*My children spend a lot of time listening to CDs in Korean, English and Russian. Also they watch TV programs in English (Participant A).*

*I teach my children languages through children's songs. My children in particular, like to sing, so she listens to children's songs a lot. I bought her a speaking doll, and she talks to it in Korean. Also she has books with buttons, which when pushed begin to read words or sentences. Therefore, these are my bilingual educational methods focused on mixed media (Participant B).*

*I teach my children different languages through animation movies (Participant C).*

Participant A is performing the bilingual education through CD, TV programs and animation movies. And participant B is doing this by children's songs, speaking dolls and books. And participant C is performing the bilingual education through animation movies. Accordingly for these results we can say the mixed media method as a perfect bilingual method.

- **By Using Print Media**

The result of in-depth interview also showed that comic books are used in the bilingual education. Comic book is a genre which is used in print media. Therefore, all participants do bilingual education through comic books and fairy tales.

*I read a lot of books for my children. Recently I have bought a book, which is called "Seven dwarves" (Russian fairy tales). And through this book I have bilingual education to my children (participant A).*

*I use comic books for doing bilingual education (participant B).*

*I read a lot of fairy tales to my children. And also children spend their time reading comic books (participant C).*

Study participants stated that the bilingual educational methods as described above. Participants A, B are doing bilingual education through fairy tales and participant C is doing bilingual education by comic books. Thus, it showed that print media is used in the bilingual education as like as mixed media.

- **By Using Babysitters**

Participant A is using a babysitter to teach languages. At first, she wanted to invite a babysitter from her home country and use her to teach Russian to her children as a second language. But for some reason the babysitter could not come to Korea. That is the reason she decided to use a babysitter to teach Korean.

*Finally, I found a Korean babysitter, but as time went on my children's Russian got worse. Because they always talk with her in Korean, they forgot the Russian that I have taught them (participant A).*

In this case, we can see importance of babysitter to learning languages. Life of language depends on society. Therefore, participant A insists that there is no society in which her children can communicate in Russian. So it is natural for her children to forget a second language.

## **PRESCHOOL OR SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION AND SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION**

Participant A's children are getting bilingual education through preschool education. She sent her children to English kindergarten to learn English. When her children start elementary school, they will go to a Korean school. Accordingly, participant A is using education institutions for learning foreign languages.

*Two of my children graduated from an English preschool and now are attending Korean school. And the youngest son goes to preschool and there he is learning English (participant A).*

Following the words of participant B, her teaching method is teaching two languages at the same time. Importance of this method is, it make children learn simultaneous interpretation and translation from one language into another. Therefore, at first it seems to take a long time, but there is a value in improving two languages skills at the same time.

*I'm teaching first and second languages by showing an object and simultaneously giving information about it in two languages. For example, in Russian a car is "mashina" and in Korean is "chadongcha". I repeat and repeat again: "Mashina is chadongcha", "Chadongcha is mashina". It is an easier way to teach and learn two languages at the same time. Probably it will be more difficult to teach two languages separately (participant B).*

Therefore, although they have different ways of teaching foreign languages to children, each way has special characteristics.

- **Problems Of Bilingual Education**

Study participants argued that problems of bilingual education are barbarism, phonic defect and natural space.

- **Barbarism**

According to the in-depth interview, participants A and B mentioned Barbarism as a problem of bilingual education. Barbarism is a mixing two or more languages at the same time in speech. Linguistics looks at it as a negative

point that spoils one's language skills. Barbarism is used when a word that you want to say does not come to mind in the language being spoken and an equivalent word is used in a second language. Also barbar words are used when the necessary word does not exist in the language being spoken (It is called lacuna).

Participants A and B argued that barbarism is a problem of bilingual education.

*My children mix three languages – Korean, English and Russian. They usually use Korean, because they were born in Korea. And they are growing up in Korea. Moreover, they go to English preschool. And sometimes I talk to them in Russian. That is the reason my children mix these languages (participant A).*

*Sometimes my children mix two languages: Russian and Korean. For example: “Mom, give me (in Korean) meal (in Russian) (participant B).*

Thus, as shown in all cases, the participants' children use barbar words depending on how many languages they speak. In case of participant A, her children can speak three languages, so they mix three languages. Children of participant B usually use two languages, so they mix two languages.

- **Phonetic Defect**

Phonetic defect is when one or more sounds' are pronounced incorrectly in the first or second language. It may be fixed with time. In bilingual education the most difficult problem of all participants is phonetic defect. They have difficulties in making the sounds which do not exist in their mother tongue. And there also can be a big problem in different sentence structure of languages.

*It is difficult enough for my children to pronounce the Russian sounds which do not exist in Korean. Sometimes when they say something I can only understand them after they have repeated three or more times (participant A).*

*My baby is so young, which is why not only Russian, but also his Korean pronunciation is not good (participant B).*

*My children's Russian pronunciation is very bad but their Korean pronunciation is good (participant C).*

As shown above all study participants argued that Russian pronunciation of their children is not good. The reason is there are a lot of differences between Russian and Korean sounds and for about 10 consonants there are no sounds in Korean. Therefore, all participants argued that in bilingual education the most difficult thing is to pronounce sounds correctly.

- **Issues of Deficiency of Natural Space**

Participant A emphasized that natural space plays the most important role in bilingual education. Because children like to learn foreign languages in natural space where they are able to talk with people and play with other children. But it is difficult to find this space for female Uzbekistani Korean multicultural families. That is why it is getting more and more difficult to support bilingual education.

*Children are able to learn any foreign language if there is natural space. Natural space is a place where people use one or more languages, but they understand each other without any problems. Children like to study through meeting people and talking to them than to study at home by themselves. Of course, I use Russian at home, but I am Uzbekistani Korean and I look like a Korean. And my children thought that it is normal for Uzbekistani Koreans talking in Russian. But*

*when they meet real Russian people, my kids suddenly feel strange and they do not answer any of their questions (participant A)*

So, in this case for children it is normal for female Uzbekistani Koreans to use Russian. But it is so strange to kids when Russians use Russian. Therefore, participant A strongly argued that it is most important to have natural space in learning any foreign languages.

This study explored the bilingual educational experience of female Uzbekistani Koreans who married Korean. To understand this process it used a qualitative case study method. Moreover, the data which are collected through in-depth interview were divided into two groups and then analyzed. The first group is called "Bilingual education methods of female Uzbekistani Korean multicultural families" and second one is "Problems of bilingual education of female Uzbekistani Korean multicultural families". Bilingual education methods of female Uzbekistani Koreans were divided into three. First is all female Uzbekistani Koreans have experienced bilingual education naturally in their home country. And they continue to use this tradition in their home. There are many people in Uzbekistan who use their mother tongue at home and go to school where all subjects are taught in the second or the third language. Most people think that it is the best way to learn any foreign language. And second is female Uzbekistani Koreans are doing the bilingual education through mixed media and print media. Third, female Uzbekistani Koreans conducted the bilingual education with the help of a babysitter, grandfather and grandmother. Babysitter is a person who takes care of the children when parents are not home. And he or she also plays a great role in the linguistic development of the child. In particular, a babysitter exerts a great influence on language acquisition of the kids. So a lot of female marriage immigrants use babysitter to reach an advanced pronunciation and to practice it. In addition, bilingual education was conducted through video calls with their grandfather and grandmother.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The result of examining the bilingual educational issues of female Uzbekistani Koreans were as follows: First, problems of bilingual education are barbarism and phonetic defect. Barbarism is a phenomenon which means mixed use of two languages at the same time. Phonetic defect is pronouncing certain words incorrectly in a second language. Second, when comparing Korean and Russian languages many differences between sentence structure and grammar appear. Therefore, it is difficult to learn Russian for native speakers of Korean. Thus, it is difficult to pronounce sounds and to make sentences correctly in Russian for children of female Uzbekistani Korean multicultural families. Third, a big issue is the bilingual education of female Uzbekistani Koreans to teach children a second language with the method which they have experienced in home country. Because, the naturally language space is deficiency. And it will be an effective language method if there is natural language space which enables children to learn foreign languages through natural conversations.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY**

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2015S1A5A2A03048350)

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